

Remarks/Arguments

Reconsideration of this application is requested.

Claim Status

Claims 1-23 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 9, and 13 are amended.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 102(e)

Claims 1-23 are rejected under 35 USC §102(e) as anticipated by Itsukaichi (USPAPN 2004/0012695 A1). Independent claims 1, 9 and 13 are amended to clearly distinguish over Itsukaichi.

Claims 1, 9, and 13 are amended to recite “wherein the driving device includes a drive coil and a drive magnet for moving the lens holder” and “wherein the lens holder is intermittently stoppable at least at two predetermined stop positions” and “is unable to stop other than said at least two predetermined stop positions by means of the magnetic action between the drive coil and the drive magnet”. These limitations are not disclosed or suggested by Itsukaichi.

Itsukaichi discloses a digital camera having an optical zoom function and an electronic zoom function that, when combined, provide an image of the specified photographic magnification. When zooming is implemented by the optical zoom function, a stepper motor is utilized to mechanically move a lens within the digital camera for changing the focusing distance. When zooming is implemented by the electronic zoom function, the image is digitally magnified. A settable range of magnifications, provided by the optical zoom function, is divided into a plurality of sub-regions. For each sub-region, one magnification setting is selected by the optical zoom function to serve as the fixed magnification and the electronic zoom function magnifies the image within the sub-region. *See Itsukaichi; abstract; page 1, paragraphs [0006] and [0012].*

In contrast, the present invention as recited in the independent claims requires a camera having a lens driving device including a lens holder that holds a lens and a driving device that moves the lens holder in an optical axis of the lens. The driving device includes a drive coil and a drive magnet for moving the lens holder. The lens holder is intermittently stoppable at least at two predetermined stop positions in the optical axis direction of the lens and is unable to stop other than at the predetermined stop positions by means of the magnetic action between the drive coil and the drive magnet. An image obtaining device captures optical images of different magnifications at the predetermined stop positions, and obtains zoom images between the predetermined stop positions based on the captured optical images at the predetermined stop positions.

Since Itsukaichi does not disclose each and every element of claims 1, 9, and 13, it cannot anticipate those claims or claims dependent thereon. Applicant submits that the rejections should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

This application is now believed to be in form for allowance. The examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned to resolve any issues that remain after entry of this amendment. Any fees due with this response may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 50-1314.

Respectfully submitted,
HOGAN & HARTSON L.L.P.

Date: October 7, 2004

By: 

Troy M. Schmelzer
Registration No. 36,667
Attorney for Applicant(s)

500 South Grand Avenue, Suite 1900
Los Angeles, California 90071
Phone: 213-337-6700
Fax: 213-337-6701